The

THOREAU SOCIETY

BULLETIN

The Thoreau Society, Inc., is an informal gathering of students and followers of Henry David Thoreau. Mrs. Herbert Hosmer, Concord, Mass., president; Robert Needham, Concord, Mass., vice-president; Walter Harding, State University College, Geneseo, New York, secretary-treasurer. Annual membership, $2.00; life membership, $25.00.

BULLETIN NINETY-TWO

SUMMER, 1965

THE 1965 ANNUAL MEETING . . .

Through an oversight, in the secretary's absence, no official minutes of the meeting were taken. The following, taken from the CONCORD JOURNAL of July 15, 1965, gives an account of the meeting:

About 200 members attended the annual meeting of the Thoreau Society at the First Parish Church last Saturday. It began with a welcoming speech by Louis McNally of the Concord Selectmen who said that Concord is both a beneficiary and a trustee of the great traditions of Thoreau and his contemporaries.

President Roland Robbins presided at a brief business meeting and at the end of the day presented the gavel to Mrs. Herbert B. Hosmer who will serve during the coming year. Mr. George Russell Rady of Montreal, Canada will succeed her in 1966. Robert Needham of Walden Terrace was chosen vice-president and Mr. Sidney Clark of Haddam, Conn. was elected to the executive board.

Andrew Lane of Melrose asked to have entered on the records his protest at the inclusion of a pacifist manifesto called "Thoreau money" in the recent mailing of a bulletin to members, not wishing to see the society become a vehicle for propaganda.

The members voted to send $100. to the John Burroughs society to help in their effort to buy land around Slabsides, the Burroughs house in the Hudson valley. The largest contribution received by the Save Walden committee from any organization came from the John Burroughs Memorial Foundation. The Save Walden Committee is returning the gift with interest.

Professor Kenneth Cameron of Trinity College distributed reprints of newly discovered Thoreau material and received the thanks of the society. The business meeting continued after a luncheon was served in the parish hall. The society voted to continue its committee appointed last year to study ways and means to an expanded program by the society.

At a simple ceremony on the beach at Walden Pond on Saturday afternoon, July 10. Mr. Edwin W. Small, project co-ordinator of the Boston National Park Service Group, presented to the Commonwealth on behalf of the group, a certificate and a bronze plaque designating Walden Pond a registered National Landmark, because of its associations with Emerson and Thoreau. Representing Governor Volpe, his aide, Lt. Comdr. Raymond O'Brien accepted the plaque.

John F. Dever, chairman of the Middlesex County Commissioners, who have charge of the Walden Pond Reservation, was introduced as was Mr. Paul Cronin, secretary to Congressman Bradford Morse, Mr. Louis McNally of the Concord Selectmen and Mr. Roland Robbins of the Thoreau Society. Each spoke briefly of their continuing interest in the Pond.

Members of the Thoreau Society who went down to the ceremony were gratified to see that work toward restoring the natural contours above the beach was in progress. The pond received national, indeed worldwide attention in 1957 when this newspaper began the publicity campaign which resulted in the Thoreau Society's appointment of a Save Walden Committee which carried through a successful suit in the courts to preserve the natural beauty of Walden Pond.

After the afternoon presentation of a plaque at Walden, 100 members walked to the cairn and around the original Emerson wood-lot. They then adjourned to Mr. Robbins' house on old Cambridge turnpike for a buffet supper and an opportunity to visit the replica of Thoreau's house on Mr. Robbins' property which he has built and furnished.

Owing to the quality of the evening programs which are arranged usually by local members, more visitors each year plan to stay overnight in Concord. This year a new tape called "Sounds of Thoreau's Journal" was played back. It included the ringing of a woodsman's axe, bird and tree-toad sounds gathered by David Dean of Taunton with a text by Edwin Way Teale.

Mr. Frank Bramley of Lexington showed exquisite color slides of flowers, ferns, leaves and mushrooms, reading Thoreau's descriptions to fit the pictures.

HOUSE HUNTING FOR HENRY D. THOREAU
by Roland W. Robbins
(1965 presidential address)

Henry Thoreau in his journal for May 4, 1860 wrote, "Quite a warm day, -70 at 6 p.m. Currant out a day or two at least, and our gooseberry a day later. P.M. - To Great Meadows by boat. -- The sun set red, shorn of its beams."

It is May 4, 1965, 105 years later. I am writing this account in my replica of Thoreau's 1845 Walden Pond house, in the woods on a slight rise of ground a hundred yards back of my home in Lincoln. My Thoreau house does not overlook a pond, nor can even a small brook be seen from it. Yet Concord's famous Walden Pond is within a mile and a half of my home, and it can be reached in a few minutes from my Thoreau house. Being situated to the rear of our property, the Thoreau house is safer from vandalism than it would be if it occupied the site of the original Thoreau house at Walden Pond.

When I entered the Thoreau house at 8:40 a.m. the temperature was a cool 54 degrees inside, and a warm 72 degrees outside my window. By 2:30 p.m. the temperature had risen to 84 degrees on the shaded side of the house; yet inside it was a comfortable 72 degrees. At 6 p.m. Standard Time the temperature was 70 degrees outside of my Thoreau house, the same temperature that Thoreau had recorded in Concord at 6 p.m exactly 105 years earlier. And this evening the sun set bleeding an orange hue through a bank of hazy clouds.

Weatherwise there was a close similarity for the dates of May 4, 1860 and May 4, 1965 in the Concord area.

It was early in May, 1845, 120 years ago, that Thoreau set up the frame for his house by Walden Pond with the help of some of his acquaintances, "-rather to improve so good an occasion for neighborliness than from any necessity."

But Thoreau also found it necessary to depart from simple neighborliness and seek the aid of his neighbors and friends with the building of his house at Walden Pond.

In late March, 1845 he borrowed an axe from Bronson Alcott and went to the woods by Walden Pond, nearest to where he intended to build his house, and began to, "cut down some tall, arrowy white pines, still in their youth," for the timbers of his house.

Ralph Waldo Emerson gave Thoreau permission to build his house on the 11 acres of land he had purchased by the pond only six months earlier for $8.00 an acre. And it was Emerson that donated the "tall, arrowy white pines" from which Thoreau hewed the main timbers "six inches square, most of the studs on two sides only, and the rafters and floor timbers on one side, leaving the rest of the bark on, so that they were just as straight and much stronger than sawed ones."

By now Thoreau had received the loan of other building tools.

"Each stick was carefully mortised or tenoned by its stump, for I had borrowed other tools by this time."

"By the middle of April, for I had made no haste in my work, but rather made the most of it, my house was framed and ready for the raising. I had already bought the shanty of James Collins, an Irishman who worked on the Fitchburg Railroad, for boards. James Collins' shanty was considered an uncommonly fine one." Whether by chance, or by choice, Thoreau acquired a better than average shanty from which to take his boards and nails, and appeared to extol his good fortune.

"I dug my celler in the side of a hill sloping to the south, where a woodchuck had formerly dug his burrow, down through sumac and blackberry roots, and the lowest stain of vegetation, six feet square by seven deep, to a fine sand where potatoes would not freeze in any winter. The sides were left shelving, and not stoned, but the sun having never shone on them, the sand still keeps its place. It was but two hours' work."

"I began to occupy my house on the 4th of July, as soon as it was boarded and roofed, for the boards were carefully feather-edged and lapped, so that it was perfectly impervious to rain, but before boarding I laid the foundation of a chimney at one end, bringing two cartloads of stones up the hill from the pond in my arms. I built the chimney after my hoeing in the fall, before a fire became necessary for warmth, doing my cooking in the meanwhile out of doors on the ground, early in the morning."

"Before winter I built a chimney, and shingled the sides of my house."

More than seven months were to pass before Thoreau completed the building of his house at Walden Pond. For it was Novem-

ber. 1845 when he wrote in his journal. "Left house on account of plastering, Wednesday, November 12, at night; returned Saturday, December 6."

"I have thus a tight shingled and plastered house, ten feet wide by fifteen long, and eight-feet posts, with a garret and a closet, a large window on each side, two trap-doors, one door at the end, and a brick fireplace opposite."

"I have also a small woodshed adjoining, made chiefly of the stuff which was left over after building the house."

This was to be Thoreau's home for two years, two months and two days. It was his compact house. In the quotations I have used, Thoreau constantly refers to it as his "house". In WALDEN he makes nearly one hundred references to his home at Walden Pond. On more than eighty occasions it is referred to as his "house". He says "lodge" three times, "dwelling" twice, "apartment" twice, "homestead" once, and only on one occasion does he use the word "hut".

Soon after Thoreau vacated his house at Walden Pond it was moved by Hugh Whelan, Emerson's Scotch gardener, into Thoreau's bean-field.

On Monday, September 3, 1849, nearly two years after Thoreau left Walden on September 6, 1847, James Clark and his brother Daniel moved the house to the family farm in the north section of Concord. Here the house had more than one resting place.

Of the last years of Thoreau's Walden house Ellery Channing said, "The windows were gone in '63, and the plaster mostly cracked off, from the moving to old Clark's (from the bean-field) in the N. part of the town, very near the opening of the old Carlisle Road. Used as a place to store corn- visited with Blake and Brown, Sept. 11, '64."

At that time the Walden house could rightfully have been called a shack, etc. No longer was it the rendezvous for philosophers and thinkers. Sacks of grain now bulged the walls that had once sheltered Thoreau, Emerson, Bronson Alcott, Channing and other great minds.

Of the last days of the Walden house, Channing said, "I saw H's rafters, June 4, 1868, the ruins of this house on the old Carlisle Road, just pulled down."

Channing also said, "The house stood in perfect condition so far as the frame and covering, to June 4, '68, a period of 23 years, and would have lasted a century. It was well built, the covering being poor." Even to the end, Channing respectfully referred to it as a "house", though it was but a shell of its former self.

The Walden house survived Thoreau by six years.

Nearly 25 years passed after Thoreau left Walden before any attempt was made to mark the site of his house, and soon it was reclaimed by nature and lost. Ellery Channing wrote, "At present (Oct., '63), I tried with Mr. Green to find the cellar hole, but could not fix it,--but have since. It is in the pathway to the pond."

In June, 1872 the Unitarian Church held their picnic at Walden Pond, which Bronson Alcott, then 72 years old, attended. In his journal Alcott wrote, "I accompany Mrs. Adams (Mrs. Mary Adams of Dubuque, Iowa) to the Unitarian Picnic at Walden Pond. See several young preachers, who express sympathy with the growing Idealism, and the hope of a spiritual Church.

Mrs. Adams suggests that visitors to Walden shall bring a stone for Thoreau's monument and begins the pile by laying stones on the site of his hermitage, which I point out to her. The tribute thus rendered to our friend may, as the years pass, become a pile to his memory. The rude stones were a monument more fitting than the costliest carving of the artist. Henry's fame is sure to brighten with years, and this spot be visited by admiring readers of his works."

Henry Thoreau's fame has brightened with the years--far more even than Bronson Alcott had visioned. By July 4, 1945, the one hundredth anniversary of Thoreau's desertion of the companionship of the village to take up residence in his self-made house at Walden Pond, the cairn was a massive heap of stones.

I attended the commemorative meeting at the cairn that day and became acquainted for the first time with the controversy concerning the site. Several in attendance felt certain that the cairn's poisition had been much closer to the pond 25 or 35 years ago. Besides, said others familiar with the details of the house, Thoreau's very words condemn this site. One gentleman quoted from WALDEN that the house had been built, "on the shore of Walden Pond. . . My house was on the side of a hill . . . and half a dozen rods from the pond." The man was obviously correct. Most certainly the cairn is not on the shore. Nor is it, in a true sense, on the side of the hill, but rather on a fairly level piece of ground.

"Rather intangible evidence," someone objected.

Another read from WALDEN, "a mink steals out of the marsh before my door and seizes a frog by the shore." Most revealing! Henry Thoreau's casual observation, made as he sat by his window, appeared to eliminate the possibility that the cairn had been correctly placed. Standing by the cairn, or on top of it for that matter, and looking in the direction of the marsh, it was physically impossible to see--to say nothing of seeing the shoreline of that side of the pond. A large knoll obstructed a view of the marsh, and the sharp rise of the pond's bank hid the shoreline. Certainly, Henry Thoreau could never have made such observations from this spot- nor identify an object the size of a frog at such a distance, even if the shoreline had been visible. This seemed to eliminate the possibility of the cairn marking the spot where Thoreau had built.

Time was getting short, and as a box lunch was to be enjoyed by many of us at the cliffs, overlooking Fairhaven Bay, one of Thoreau's favorite haunts, we had to be getting on.

Twenty years have passed since that memorable day at the Walden cairn, commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of Thoreau's moving into his new house. Neither the space nor the time here will permit me to relate all of the fascinating experiences and the startling coincidents that accompanied my work at Walden Pond. The research and the digging unearthed the buried remains of Thoreau's "tight shingled and plastered house, ten feet wide by fifteen long,--with a garret and a closet, a large window on each side, two trap-doors, one door at the end, and a brick fireplace opposite."

Suffice to say, the Walden search gave me some of the most exciting and satisfying experiences of my lifetime. Thoreau said, "I laid the foundation of a chimney at one end, bringing two cartloads of stones up the hill from the pond in my arms." Imagine the tingling sensation I received when I uncovered Thoreau's chimney foundation just to the rear of the cairn, each stone in position just as it had been placed there by Thoreau!

And think of the thrill I received when digging beneath the roots of a pine tree that began its growth in 1854, seven years after Thoreau left the pond, I found 276 pounds of bricks, plaster, mortar and window glass and many of the house nails! This rubble had been dumped near the chimney foundation when Hugh Whelan moved the house to the bean-field. Subsequent digging unearthed much more of the house debris at the site.

In time, the site of the woodshed was found; also the outdoor fireplace where Thoreau, before building his chimney and fireplace after his hoeing in the fall, did his cooking "out of doors on the ground, early in the morning."

Later Thoreau's "six feet square by seven deep" unstoned cellar was excavated. It was located between the center of the house and the front door. And it was directly below the heap of cairn stones! Bronson Alcott had not erred when he directed Mrs. Mary Adams to place the cairn's first stone at this site during the Unitarian Church picnic in June, 1872!

I doubt that any coincidence that might happen to me in the future will be as unusual as the sudden appearance of two army sergeants, just when I was uncovering my first discovery of bricks, and plaster and nails at the house site. One sergeant asked me what I was digging for. I told him I had just found the first evidence of Thoreau's house site. I asked him his name. "I am Henry David Thoreau, Jr.", he replied. To add to this remarkable coincidence, Mr. Wallace Conant of Concord, who had been following my work with much interest, came up the pathway to where I was standing with young Thoreau and his friend. "Mr. Conant, I want you to meet Henry David Thoreau, Jr.", I said. Mr. Conant very cordially accepted Sgt Thoreau's hand in both his, saying, "How do you do, Mr. Thoreau." Then, while still grasping young Thoreau's hand, he turned to the other soldier and with his dry Yankee humor asked, "-and who is this, Ralph Waldo Emerson?"

Poor Sgt. Thoreau! He blushed, and fumbling about for his army identification tag said, "My name is Heury David Thoreau, Jr. Here, see for yourself."

Sure enough, it read:
Henry D. Thoreau, Jr.
19132462 T-43-43 B
Henry D. Thoreau
2479 N. Highland Ave.
Altadena, Calif. P

When I worked at Walden Pond, I felt that I was living with Thoreau. He helped me reconstruct the Walden he knew. He confided in me the plans he made and carried out in building his house. He introduced me to his nature friends.

More than ever, I fully realized what Thoreau meant when he said, "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, When I first heard these words I was searching only for clues that would help me locate the buried ruins of his house, but I found that Thoreau's philosophy was far more valuable than his descriptions of Walden. I was one of many who did not want to "lead lives of quiet desperation", and Thoreau taught me to reach for "the marrow of life."

To me his words mean: Don't conform. Don't please others unless you also satisfy yourself. Reach -- until it hurts! In reaching far enough we find what it means to be truly alive.

With my work at Walden Pond I felt that I came as close as any of my contemporaries to meeting and visiting with Henry David Thoreau in person. Maybe I did it the hard way. But then, I did it my way. And by doing it my way I found a contentment most suitable for my way of life. and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

If ever a man learned how to live his own life, it was Thoreau. He could find companionship in solitude, and recognize a symphony in the small sounds of everyday. "I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life," he wrote. ". . . to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms. . ".

SOME MANUSCRIPTS OF CONCORD AUTHORS by Herbert Cahoon, Curator of Manuscripts, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York City (Delivered at the 1965 annual meeting)

Some three years after the minutemen exchanged shots with General Gage's British regulars and drove them back to Boston, Dr. Ezra Ripley was ordained as pastor of the First Parish Church in Concord. It is a great privilege for me to speak in this present Church this morning at the invitation of the Thoreau Society.

Cape Cod

This year marks the centennial of the publication of Thoreau's "Cape Cod" (although it actually appeared in time for the Christmas book trade of 1864) and I was at first tempted to speak of these memorable sketches. I am a Cape Codder, born and bred, and remember my father telling that he often saw, as a boy, the stage coach that came down from Sandwich over the heavy roads -- no doubt a descendant of the one that Thoreau rode in such agreeable company.

My native town of Chatham is treated lightly in Thoreau's account. He mentions the heavy fogs with which the natives and summer people are still familiar, but there is now a difference between breakfast and supper, "cheese, cakes, and pies," no longer being as common at the one as at the other; and Chatham men, if they now drag for anchors do it with the instincts of an antiquarian -- occasionally they are able to show that it is treasure for

us which another man has lost.

The time has come and Cape Cod is now a place of resort not only for New-Englanders but for many from other states, --very much so. Investigators who lived later than Thoreau believe that they have found in the record that 18th century citizens of Chatham planted beach grass and scrub pines on the sandy and commanding summit of Great Hill to prevent the sand from blowing over the town, the earliest experiment in reforestation in America. Conservation continues on Cape Cod with recent legislation to protect the National Seashore. Cape Cod is not a subject easily exhausted; by itself, and in books and manuscripts, it can detain you.

Manuscripts

But I thought that a discussion of some manuscripts of Concord authors, especially those of Thoreau, might be a subject of greater general interest and I have, accordingly, assembled descriptions of a number of autograph letters and manuscripts in the collections of the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York City, and shall quote from them.

I think that a good many of you have visited or worked with the collections of the Library and I will say here only that it is a reference library which is used by some 2000 readers and that its exhibitions are visited by up to 65,000 persons annually. The library is composed of a collection of mediaeval and renaissance manuscripts and master drawings by artists most of whom lived before 1800 -- both collections are considered the finest of their kind in the western hemisphere; with these are very superior collections of literary first editions, books printed in the fifteenth century--and what I am concerned with today,--a group of tens of thousands of autograph letters and manuscripts of literary and historical personages.

A large number of our manuscripts by Concord authors were acquired in 1909 when Pierpont Morgan purchased the collection formed by Stephen H. Wakeman. It included 263 manuscripts (including a few letters) of nine American authors: Hawthorne, Emerson, Thoreau, Longfellow, Bryant, Poe, Holmes, Whittier, and Lowell.

Hawthorne

The Hawthorne group includes the title-page and contents of THE SCARLET LETTER, all that survives, and the complete manuscript of THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE, DR. GRIMSHAWE'S SECRET, THE DOLLIVER ROMANCE, SEPTIMIUS FELTON, and all of the JOURNALS except for a small portion of the Italian Journal which is in the Huntington Library.

Emerson is represented by the manuscripts of seven essays and poems and Thoreau by the great JOURNAL in thirty-nine manuscript volumes. THE SERVICE, an essay that Margaret Fuller declined to publish in THE DIAL, the INDIAN AND CANADIAN NOTEBOOKS in twelve volumes, and many essays, poems, and letters.

A number of fine items have been acquired since the Wakeman sale, by purchase and gift and some of the finest have come to us during the past few years as the Gift of the Fellows of the Morgan Library, and as a gift from Mr. John L. Colley.

Thoreau - A Teacher

To begin this excursion into manuscripts and letters I would first like to return to Dr. Ezra Ripley. On May 1, 1838, he wrote a letter addressed to "the friends of education" saying that "The undersigned very cheerfully hereby introduces to public notice, the bearer, Mr. David Henry Thoreau, as a Teacher in the higher branches of useful literature. He is a native of this town, and a graduate of Harvard University. He is well disposed and well qualified to instruct the rising generation. His scholarship and moral character will bear the strictest scrutiny. He is modest and mild in his disposition and government, but not wanting in energy of character and fidelity in the duties of his profession.

"It is presumed, his character and usefulness will be appreciated more highly as an acquaintance with him shall be cultivated. Cordial wishes for his success, reputation and usefulness attend him, as an instructor and geneleman. Ezra Ripley, Senior pastor of first church in Concord, Mass. N. B. It is but justice to observe here, that the eyesight of the writer is much impaired."

On the following day, another citizen of Concord wrote a letter of recommendation." I cordially recommend Mr. Henry D. Thoreau, a graduate of Harvard University in August, 1837, to the confidence of such parents or guardians as may propose to employ him as an instructor. I have the highest confidence in Mr. Thoreau's moral character and in his intellctual ability. He is an excellent scholar, a man of energy and kindness, and I shall esteem the town fortunate that secures his services." Concord, May 2, 1838. R. Waldo Emerson.

There were other letters of recommendation including one from the President of Harvard, but Thoreau had a mixed success as a teacher. I would like to add here that we have another fine letter from Dr. Ripley written five years before his death in 1841 to the historian, Benjamin Bussey Hatcher in Boston. He evaluates the accounts that have been written of the Concord fight, and takes a dim view of most. He finds that "time sharpens the memory of some people, and there is no knowing what new claims to honor and courage and patriotism may yet be made, as time progresses.".

At Harvard

The Library has five of the themes which Thoreau wrote for his rhetoric class at Harvard, one of which, acquired earlier this year, without Sanborn's penciled "c" (standing for copy or cash), is a new version of his "Advantages and disadvantages of foreign influence on American Literature," in which he concludes "Our national pride has been roused by the perusal of sundry journals and books of travels, purporting to contain faithful descriptions of men and manners in America; the remarks of English and Scotch reviewers have, in various instances, induced us to be more careful in the use of language, and to discard much that is superfluous or provincial in our vocabulary.

"We are not toally indifferent with regard to the notice which the soi-disant critics of Europe have condescended to take of our literature, and though we may affect to overlook their cutting remarks, or regard them as the sallies of envy and calumny, still we feel that they are not entirely without foundation. The more cuffs and hard knocks we sustain, the more robust and manly we grow. Each successive defeat afforded the Carthaginians new lessons in the art of war, till, at length, Rome herself trembled at their progress."

Letters

Our Thoreau letters have, of course, all been printed in the 1958 edition edited by Professors Harding and Bode. As personal favorites among them I might mention the letter in Latin to his sister, Helen, of January 21, 1840, the letter to his mother written in 1843 from Staten Island in which he mentions that the brothers Harper, publishers, did not find Thoreau would be useful to them for "they are making fifty thousand dollars annually, and their motto is to let well alone."

Nor can an autograph man remain indifferent to the letter to Richard F. Fuller, Margaret's younger brother, in which he says, "I write this with one of the 'primaries' of my osprey's wings, which I have preserved over my glass for some state occasion--and now it affords." Although they are not manuscripts, the Library is particularly proud of a dozen pencils with paper wrapper, manufactured by J. Thoreau & Co., and a piece of wood from the Old North Bridge of 1775 which was presented by the Selectmen of Concord. On one recent occasion this relic of "the rude bridge that arched the flood" shared an exhibition case with our extremely rare first printing of Emerson's CONCORD HYMN, thoughtfully preserved by Thoreau in one of his notebooks.

Other Authors

I should now like to change course for a bit and speak of other authors associated with Concord. One manuscript volume which unites several of the writers is the collection of autograph speeches delivered at John Brown Relief and Memorial Meetings held at Salem and Concord, in 1859 and 1860, which was a part of the Wakeman Collection. In the autographs of Emerson, Thoreau, Alcott and Sanborn it contains some stirring and eloquent speeches, copies of John Brown's letters and quotations from the works of other authors which seemed appropriate to the occasions.

Fifty years after he had negotiated the sale of the Wakeman manuscripts to Mr. Morgan, the then retired dealer, George S. Hellman, presented the Library with the JOURNAL which Franklin Benjamin Sanborn kept in 1854 and 1855; Hellman had purchased it from Sanborn himself. The JOURNAL kept by this biographer of the Concord great records conversations with Alcott, Emerson, Longfellow, and Thoreau, with many glimpses of life among the Transcendentalists and their friends. According to Sanborn, William Ellery Channing had his own opinion concerning an important publication of 1855. "He did not like 'Leaves of Grass'; thought it not original. Mr. Emerson would praise it for six weeks, and then forget it; that was his fashion.

The author would come to Concord; Mr. Emerson has written to him. His name is Whitman, and there are good reports on him; he is better looking than his picture." Mr. John Cooley, a few years later gave us a letter from William James to Sanborn written in the 1880's telling why he could not teach in the Concord School of Philosophy and taking six pages to do so.

Margaret Fuller, Marchesa Ossoli, a founder and editor of THE DIAL and one of the most learned and brilliant American women, sailed in the Elisabeth from Leghorn on May 17, 1850, accompanied by her husband, her infant son, and the manuscript of her book on the Italian struggle for freedom. A month later the vessel was wrecked on Fire Island beach, and the Ossolis perished.

Margaret had a strong belief in life after death; she must also have had a premination of her fate, for in several letters written just prior to her departure she mentions death at sea. One of these letters, addressed to the American sculptor and poet, William Wetmore Story, and written from Florence on May 10, 1850 --a week before the sailing-- was also given to the library by Mr. Cooley. "The improptitious weather" Margaret Fuller wrote, "rain from the 4 April up to the present time delays us now from day to day as our Ship the Elisabeth (look out for news of shipwreck)

cannot finish taking her cargo till come one or two good days." Word of the wreck shocked and saddened Margaret Fuller's many Concord friends.

Emerson dispatched Thoreau to Fire Island to gather news and to search for her manuscripts and property. There was little to be found or identified, and Thoreau could send Emerson only the report of an eyewitness that "Margaret sat with her back to the foremast with her hands over her knees--her husband and child already drowned--a great wave came and washed her off." The Library has two pages in Thoreau's hand, removed from the manuscript edition of his works, in which he tells of various articles of clothing, a man's shirt, a child's petticoat, and a shift with the initials S.M.F. which had already been taken by beachcombers.

The Poet

William Ellery Channing, nephew and namesake of the theologian, was recognized by his contemporaries as a poet of potential genius; we think of him today chiefly as the unwavering friend of Thoreau, who tramped cross-lots with him hour after hour, or sat beside him on a fallen tree-trunk exchanging transcendental thoughts and classical questions.

When Thoreau went to Cape Cod and the Maine woods, Channing was his companion. Channing was the first to write a biography of his friend. A curious Channing manuscript, miscatalogued as by the theologian, appeared at auction in October, 1950 and was purchased by the Library. It is called "Concord Walks," and is most unprepossessing in appearance, as it is written in pencil, largely on the backs of old handbills announcing "Mr. Channing's Lectures on Society" -- the theologians' lectures, of course. This manuscript may have been prepared for a projected book recording the saunterings and conversations, not only of Thoreau and Channing, but of Emerson and others of the Concord group.

The "Walks" are numbered I to XXVI, though there are no longer 26 of them left, perhaps for a very practical reason. The story is told by F. B. Sanborn. When the publisher complained that the copy Channing had turned in for his biography of Thoreau fell short of the anticipated length by about 50 pages, he readily consented to make up the deficit. He simply turned to his old manuscript of the "Walks", extracted sufficient material, reworked it slightly, cut open the biography roughly in the middle, and inserted the addition.

In the biography the insertion occupies two chapters, each headed "Walks and Talks." One must confess the justice of Thoreau's characterization of Channing's literacy craftsmanship as sublime-slipshod. The exact relationship of our incomplete Channing manuscript of the added chapters in the biography is still an intriguing problem awaiting some student of American literature.

We also have a notebook in which Channing copies out passages from Thoreau's then unpublished JOURNAL, and in the preface to this notebook Channing sums up the mystery that Thoreau presented to many of his friends. "Nothing bothered him so much as the friendships. Those and his moral sensitiveness. He could never do or be enough apparently. . . I have never been able to understand what he meant by his life. . . Why was he so disappointed with everybody else &c. Why was he so much interested in the river and the woods and the sky &c. Something peculiar I judge."

Mr. Thorow

The entry for September 1, 1842 in Nathaniel Hawthorne's AMERICAN NOTEBOOKS provides us with another description of Thoreau. Hawthorne and his bride had come to live in Concord in July. "Mr. Thorow (sic) dined with us yesterday. He is a singular character--a young man with much of wild original nature still remaining in him; and so far as he is sophisticated, it is in a way and method of his own. He is as ugly as sin, long-nosed, queer-mouthed, and with uncouth and somewhat rustic, although courteous manners, corresponding very well with such as exterior. But his ugliness is of an honest and agreeable fashion, and becomes him much better than beauty." An important aspect of this description is that Thoreau's name is spelled by Hawthorne as it was pronounced, "Thorow".

One of the Library's most important acquisitions of last year was the autograph manuscript of Hawthorne's TANGLEWOOD TALES, which was presented by the Fellows of the Library. It is dated, Concord, Mass., 13 March 1853. This, like our other Hawthorne manuscripts, will be used in the edition of his works being prepared by Ohio State University.

The Journal

The JOURNAL of Thoreau is certainly one of the most important manuscripts in American literature. About 95 per cent of it is in the Library, comprising 40 volumes. Thirty-nine are part of the Wakeman Collection and the fortieth is the so-called "lost" JOURNAL of 1840-41 which was acquired by the Library in 1956. One of the forty contains notes for A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS with entries dated between 1839 and 1846; this, unlike the other volumes, is in folio size and was never intended to fit into the yellow pine box that tradition says Thoreau made to hold his JOURNAL. And I want to announce on this occasion that many of the volumes will no longer fit into the box.

Several years ago we had a half-leather protective case made for each volume and the added bulk makes it necessary to shelve about a dozen of the volumes in a position adjoining the box in our vault.

We have a few items related to the JOURNAL which are not widely known and I think might be worth mentioning here. There is a three-page fragment called "Musings, Apr. 20th, 1835" written several months before Thoreau's eighteenth birthday. Sanborn, in a typewritten note on the back of the last page, calls it the earliest bit of "journalizing" yet discovered; it was printed by him in his first life of Thoreau.

In 1942, George S. Hellman presented a letter written to him in 1907 by E. H. Russell which reads in part" At length! The manuscript JOURNAL came from Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. the last of last week. . . I am reluctant to part with such a treasure, for a consideration so much below its value, but I shall keep my promise. My main purpose was to see the Journal in print, and that purpose is now realized."

It was Bliss Perry, then editor of the ATLANTIC MONTHLY, who told Hellman that Russell owned the manuscript JOURNAL and Hellman actually sold it twice--once to Mr. Wakeman and once to Mr. Morgan. A letter from Emerson in 1876 reveals that it was Emerson himself who shipped the manuscripts to H. G. O. Blake after the death of Sophia Thoreau. He sent the locked trunks but forgot to send the keys to them until later. And we have a letter from Sophia to Thomas Wentworth Higginson written in 1866. Higginson had offered to edit her brother's JOURNAL but Sophia replied "These papers are very sacred to me and I feel inclined to defer giving them to the public for the present."

I sincerely hope that support may be forthcoming for the projected re-editing of Thoreau's JOURNAL. There is still much to be recovered from these manuscripts, I believe. I have not made a detailed study but have compared sample entries. What has been omitted is noted in the preface to the JOURNAL and a number of these would seem to be of value as interest in the work of Thoreau constantly increases. For the entries about 30 December, 1856, for example, it is useful to know that the W farm is the farm of S. G. Wheeler -- although an educated guess might have made it so without access to the manuscript.

Conclusion

I hope that my remarks this morning, although sketchy, may give some idea of some very important letters and manuscripts that are in the keeping of the Morgan Library. We are proud to have them and proud to know that such a significant period in American literature is represented in our collections.

In the 11 years that I have been a member of the staff we have had two major exhibitions devoted to Thoreau and his times, and in an exhibition of representative treasures of the Library which I am preparing for this fall Thoreau will again be included. *One of the nicest things that has happened in these 11 years of Concord associations is this invitation to speak in Concord itself and in this church. On behalf of the Library and myself, I thank you for this honor.

*The letter from Emerson recommending Thoreau as a teacher which I quoted earlier in this talk is on exhibition at the New York World's Fair.

As as experiment, there will be an informal get-together dinner meeting of members of the Thoreau Society at the annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English in Boston, Mass., on Wednesday, Nov. 24, 1965, at the Sheraton-Boston Hotel. The meeting will be open to members of the Thoreau Society, members of the NCTE, and anyone else interested in Thoreau. People wishing advance details of the meeting should write Prof. Raymona E. Hull, English Dept., Indiana State College, Indiana, Pennsylvania, who will chair the meeting. Notice will also be posted in the lobby of the Sheraton-Boston Hotel the day of the meeting. If this informal get-together proves successful, similar meetings will be scheduled at future conventions of the NCTE and the Modern Language Association.

The following have recently become life members of the Thoreau Society: Mrs. Frederick M. Combellack (Eugene, Oregon), Mr. Peveril Meigs (Wayland, Mass.), Mrs. Henry J. Wheelwright (Orono, Maine), Mr. Albert Butler (Arlington Heights, Ill.), Mr. James E. Burke (Chicago, Ill.), Mr. W. G. Duncan (Louiseville, Ky.), and Mrs. Maurice Kamen-Kaye (Tulsa, Okla.). Life membership in the Thoreau Society is $25.00.

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